

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

POLLUTION REPORT

DATE: August 21, 1989

Region II
Response and Prevention Branch
Edison, New Jersey 08837

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(201) 548-8730 - Commercial and FTS
24 Hour Emergency

POLREP NO.: One (1) and Final
INCIDENT NAME: S & A Plastics
SITE/SPILL NO.:
POLLUTANT: Ammonium Hydroxide
CLASSIFICATION: Potential Major
SOURCE: S & A Plastics
LOCATION: 350 Roosevelt Ave., Carteret, N.J.
AMOUNT: 50 Pounds
WATER BODY: Arthur Kill

1. SITUATION:

A. Early Saturday morning, August 19, 1989, a fire broke out at the S & A Plastics Recycling facility in Carteret, New Jersey. The Carteret Office of Emergency Management (COEM) was activated and initial responders to the scene included approximately seven fire companies, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the Middlesex County HazMat (MCHM) team and the US Coast Guard (USCG).

B. Major concerns at this time were potential plume contaminants, the potential for an adjacent building (Unocal) to be involved in the fire and a run-off of oil from the site which was entering an unknown creek which is a direct inlet of the Arthur Kill. The Unocal facility is a subdivision of the Chevron Chemical division and contained numerous solvents, flammable liquids and hazardous chemicals.

C. The USEPA received a request by the NJDEP to assist in air monitoring at the site and at approximately 0930 hrs. the EPA-TAT team was activated.

2. ACTION TAKEN:

A. At approximately 0940 hrs on August 19, 1989 EPA-TAT contacted the Carteret Fire Department for an update of the situation and for directions to the site command post. EPA-TAT

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was informed that the fire was under control and that the gravity of the situation had been downgraded.

B. EPA-TAT activated an air monitoring team on standby and responded to the site to investigate current conditions.

C. At approximately 1010 hrs, EPA-TAT arrived at the site command post and met with a representative of the NJDEP. It was ascertained at this time, that air monitoring performed by the NJDEP and the MCHM had not detected any hazardous chemicals in the fire plume or surrounding community other than normal hydrocarbons. The main concern was the threat of involvement of the Unocal facility.

D. At approximately 1045 hrs, EPA-TAT attended a meeting at the Carteret Borough Hall. The meeting was attended by EPA-TAT, Mr. Nagey (COEM), Sgt. E. O'Niell (State Police Emergency Management), Chief Miller (USCG) and Mr. F. Stoop (NJDEP). At the meeting the following information was attained:

1. The fire broke out from unknown causes at approximately 0523 hrs.
2. Approximately 600 people were evacuated due to unknown contents of the smoke plume and the potential for involvement of the Unocal facility.
3. Seventeen (17) people had been taken to local hospitals for various degrees of smoke inhalation. Most had already been released.
4. Two drums of ammonium hydroxide stored on the Unocal property had been involved in the fire. All parties agreed that due to the amounts of fire fighting water and rain, this release posed no real threat.
5. The fire was declared under control and no further potential existed for the involvement of Unocal in this incident.
6. Air monitoring has been discontinued. All previous monitoring showed no positive results other than hydrocarbons. At this time, the S & A building had been completely burned out.
7. Oil, from an unknown source, was running off from the site to an unknown creek which is direct inlet of the Arthur Kill. The MCHM was attempting to place booms in the creek to contain the oil before the tide began to go out.
8. Mr. Nagey (COEM) stated that a return to the area by evacuees was at their discretion and that at this time a voluntary evacuation would remain in effect until 1500 hrs.

E. AT approximately 1200 hrs, EPA-TAT inspected the fire scene from a safe distance along with the USCG and the NJDEP. The S & A Plastics facility was still smoldering but had been completely burned out. At this time, some fire companies were beginning to wind down activities. One side of the Unocal building was scorched but no other material had been involved in the fire other than the two drums of ammonium hydroxide.

F. EPA-TAT met with representatives of the MCHM team and confirmed that all air monitoring data had been negative other than hydrocarbons and that air monitoring had been ceased due to lack of any further threat.

G. By approximately 1300 hrs. the MCHM team had sausage booms and a boom skirt in place on the creek. The tide in the creek was beginning to flow out and the booms were working to the satisfaction of the USCG. The oil probably emanated from machinery in the facility and the USCG estimated that less than on barrel was involved.

H. At approximately 1400 hrs. EPA-TAT confirmed with the NJDEP and the COEM that no further actions were required by the EPA-TAT and departed the site.

3. FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. On August 20, 1989, the MCHM team will return to the site and inspect the booms in the creek.

B. The NJDEP, Office of Solid Waste Management will oversee any further cleanup operations required at the site.

FURTHER
POLREPS
FINAL POLREP X FORTHCOMING _____ SUBMITTED BY W. Gad Tawadros
W. Gad Tawadros, OSC
Response and
Prevention Branch

DATE OF RELEASE: 8-21-89